I. AMENDMENTS

In the claims:

Please cancel claims 58-64.

Please amend claim 40 as follows:

40. (Amended) A method for stimulating the tyrosine phosphorylation of a Flt4 tyrosine kinase receptor in a Flt4-expressing cell, comprising contacting the cell with a composition comprising a polypeptide comprising the amino acid residues 21 to 49 of SEQ ID NO:3, in an amount effective to stimulate the tyrosine phosphorylation of said Flt4 tyrosine kinase receptor.

II. REMARKS

Claim 40 is amended. Claims 58-64 are canceled. As such, claims 40-57 are pending. Support for the amended claim 40 can be found throughout the specification, and particularly in Examples 4 and 5 on pages 76-80 (describing effective binding and stimulation of Flt4 by VRP). With respect to canceled claims and all amendments, Applicants have not dedicated or abandoned any unclaimed subject matter and moreover have not acquiesced to any rejections and/or objections made by the Office Action. Applicants reserve the right to pursue prosecution of any presently excluded claim embodiments in future continuation and/or divisional applications.

Applicants submit concurrently herewith a supplemental IDS under 37 C.F.R. 1.97(c). The supplemental IDS contains two U.S. patents and one non-patent reference. The two U.S. patents are related to the U.S. Patent No. 5,932,540 that was cited in the Office Action mailed July 27, 2001. The reference of Ferrara (1999) will be discussed below in response to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(e).

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph

Claims 40-57 are rejected as being indefinite for allegedly failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the inventive subject matter.

Claims 40-49 are rejected as allegedly being incomplete for omitting essential steps regarding the result of contacting the cell with the subject polypeptides. Applicants submit that claim 40 has been amended to more clearly indicate that the claimed method comprises contacting the cell with the subject polypeptide in an amount effective to stimulate the tyrosine phosphorylation of the Flt4 tyrosine kinase receptor. As such, the